



Integrated Quality Management to Enhance the Performance of Al Quraniyy Islamic Boarding School in Kotagajah, Central Lampung

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Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of human resources within society. The aspiration for high-quality education is a common dream shared by many. When implemented effectively, Total Quality Management (TQM) can significantly contribute to improving the performance of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This study aims to explore the process of program development, implementation, and the factors influencing the application of TQM. A descriptive method with a qualitative approach was employed. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, involving subjects such as caregivers (pengasuh), teachers (asatidz), and administrators. The findings reveal that Al-Quraniyy Islamic Boarding School in Kotagajah, Central Lampung, designs its programs based on the fundamental principles of Total Quality Management. The implementation process, led by the pesantren leadership, involves all stakeholders contributing to the institution. The benefits of TQM application are evident in the improved performance of the teachers, which in turn positively affects the students' achievements and the overall institutional performance. Two main categories of factors influence the implementation of TQM. First, supporting factors include the competence of the human resources (teachers and caregivers), adequate infrastructure, and strong trust and interest from the community, particularly parents. Second, inhibiting factors involve suboptimal human resources and a work culture among teachers and administrators that has not fully aligned with TQM principles.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial element in the process of national development, playing a highly significant role in determining a nation's future. Moreover, education is viewed as an investment in human resource development, where the enhancement of skills and competencies is considered a vital factor in enabling individuals to face various life challenges. Progress in education has a direct impact on the mindset and attitudes of the human resources it produces, allowing them to endure and adapt to the changes brought by time, as well as advances in science and technology.

In the midst of rapid advancements in science and technology and the current wave of globalization, educational practitioners and policymakers are required to develop effective strategies for advancing

education and achieving quality standards. In this way, graduates will be able to compete in the job market, at least domestically. A new paradigm in education management has granted *pondok pesantren* greater autonomy to manage their own needs in order to improve the quality of education. However, in reality, education has yet to fully meet public expectations, and the quality of human resources it produces remains suboptimal.

Education is a fundamental need that cannot be neglected and is of great importance to every nation, as it is directly linked to the country's future in the national development process. Furthermore, education plays a strategic role in empowering human potential to become better and more mature individuals. Through education, human resource capabilities are continuously developed to equip them with the necessary skills to confront life's challenges. In other words, individuals who are expected to face the future must possess broad insight, appropriate skills, independence, and a sense of responsibility (Engkoswara & Aan Komariah, 2012).

To improve the quality of human resources (HR), education is a primary factor that must be prioritized. In other words, a person's level of education has a significant impact on the quality of their human capital. This is in line with the aspirations of society as outlined in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila as the ideological foundation of the Indonesian nation.

The main goal of education in *pondok pesantren* is to provide character-based education. The realization of good character and noble conduct among *santri* (students) is a key outcome and one of the indicators of successful education in Islamic boarding schools. *Santri* are expected to grow into mature individuals as measured by several indicators, including professional qualifications, creative skills, and positive behavior. As stated by Sukardjo and Komarudin, quality education will fundamentally produce quality human resources. These quality human resources must be nurtured from an early stage, aligned with the potential of each learner, beginning from primary through secondary to higher education. With appropriate educational services, they will become skilled, creative, innovative, and well-mannered individuals (Sukardjo & Komarudin, 2012).

Quality education is not only assessed by the competencies of graduates but also by how well educational institutions meet stakeholder needs according to applicable quality standards while instilling noble character based on Islamic teachings. Therefore, the performance of the human resources involved in delivering character-based education must be a major consideration.

Efforts to improve the quality of education in *pondok pesantren* including curriculum development, enhancing teacher professionalism, fulfilling facilities and infrastructure needs, and empowering the educational process have been, are being, and will continue to be carried out in a sustainable manner. These efforts are part of the government's agenda (Abdul Rachman Saleh, 2004). One approach to improving the quality of Islamic boarding schools is ensuring satisfaction across all systems within the educational process.

Currently, developments in management thinking are focused on a system known as Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is a program designed to meet the needs, desires, and expectations of stakeholders, both in the present and in the future. To achieve this, all parties involved in the education process including caregivers, *asatidz* (teachers), administrators, and *santri* must clearly understand the essence and goals of education.

In general, Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy in Kotagajah, Central Lampung, plays an important role in preparing human resources who meet the established standards of educational quality. The focus of this study is "The Implementation of Total Quality Management in Improving the Performance of Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung." This pesantren was selected as the research site due to its notable success in producing Qur'an memorizers (*huffaz*) in a relatively short time.

METHOD

This study describes the implementation of Total Quality Management in efforts to improve performance at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung. The method used in this research is descriptive with a qualitative approach. According to Creswell, "qualitative research is a process of exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals' and groups' behavior, as well as describing social problems or human issues" (Sugiyono, 2013). The qualitative method was selected because it can be easily adjusted when faced with various complex realities (Ahmad Tanzeh, 2011). This study is categorized as qualitative because the data collected are qualitative in nature, not quantitative, which generally relies on measuring instruments. The objective is to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions, in a holistic manner. The data are presented descriptively using words and language, in a specific natural context, and through the use of various relevant methods (Noeng Muhadjir, 2002).

In this study, the author selected several respondents considered relevant and capable of providing accurate information. Therefore, interviews were conducted with the *pengasuh* (principal caregiver) of Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, several *asatidz* (teachers), and administrators as the primary subjects. In

addition, the author also requested permission from the pesantren secretary to obtain supplementary data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Total Quality Management

Etymologically, the term *management* is derived from the word “to manage,” which in the *English-Indonesian Dictionary* by Echols and Shadily means to take care of, organize, execute, or control (John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, 2003). Terminologically, management is a process that involves planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling human resources (HR) as well as other resources, with the goal of achieving objectives effectively and efficiently.

Management is often viewed as a science, a skill, and a profession. Luther Gulick describes it as a science because management is a systematic field of knowledge that seeks to understand why and how individuals can work together. Meanwhile, Mary Parker Follett sees it as a skill, emphasizing that management aims to achieve goals by directing others in completing tasks. Furthermore, management is considered a profession as it is based on specific expertise aimed at achieving targeted performance, where managers and professionals are expected to adhere to ethical codes (Nanang Fattah, 1997).

In the context of education, management can be interpreted as an activity that integrates various educational resources toward the attainment of predetermined educational goals. The term *management* refers to a collective activity, unlike *administration*, which emphasizes individual responsibility, or *supervision*, which is carried out through a supervisory role (Made Pidarta, 1998).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that management is an effort or action aimed at achieving goals through a system of collaboration that optimizes the contributions of people, funds, and other resources. Therefore, good management is one that aligns with the existing concept and is adapted to the object being managed and the conditions of the organization. Management must also be flexible, meaning it should be able to adapt to various existing situations and conditions (Musfirotun Yusuf, 2005).

In the educational context, Total Quality Management (TQM) is more commonly referred to as Total Quality Education (TQE). This management concept developed from the principles of TQM originally implemented in the business world and later adapted for education. TQM consists of three main components: total, quality, and management, with the primary focus on quality improvement.

Regarding the term *quality*, various definitions have been proposed by experts. Crosby defines quality as “conformance to requirements.” Juran and Gray describe it as “fitness for use.” Fred Smith, CEO of General Express, defines quality as performance that meets customer expectations. Meanwhile, the General Services Administration (GSA) defines quality as consistently meeting customer needs from the beginning and at all times (Kuat Ismanto, 2009).

According to Gaspersz, quality management or TQM is defined as an approach for continuous performance improvement at every operational level or process and across all functional areas of an organization, using all available human and financial resources (Vincent Gaspersz, 2005).

Total Quality Management is a management concept aimed at providing appropriate responses to any changes that occur. TQM emphasizes the organization's goals in meeting customer needs. In Indonesia, TQM is better known as *Manajemen Mutu Terpadu (MMT)*, a philosophy and culture of management oriented toward quality. The expected outcome of TQM culture is to meet or even exceed customer needs and expectations.

TQM functions effectively in various organizations as a management system aimed at improving the quality of products or outcomes to be acceptable to customers while minimizing serious errors. Hence, the goal of TQM is to provide customer satisfaction as efficiently as possible.

Total Quality Management in Education

TQM is a modern management concept that seeks to respond effectively to internal and external organizational changes. The basic premise behind the importance of TQM is simple the best way to compete globally is by delivering the highest quality.

In education, TQM incorporates two interrelated but distinct ideas. First, it represents a philosophy of continuous improvement. Second, it includes tools and techniques such as brainstorming and field analysis used to improve quality. However, the focus of TQM in education is not limited to meeting the needs of external customers. Colleagues within educational institutions are also customers who require internal services to effectively carry out their duties. Everyone working in schools, colleges, universities, or pesantren functions as both service providers and customers. Education is about the learning process of society; thus, to make TQM relevant, attention must be paid to the quality of student learning. This cannot be achieved without substantial contributions toward improving educational quality.

TQM in education is a system that emphasizes quality improvement efforts aimed at customer

satisfaction as the primary goal. Customers in this context are divided into internal and external stakeholders (Usman Husaini, 2010). In education, internal customers include institutional managers such as caregivers (*pengasuh*), teachers (*asatidz*), administrators, and organizers themselves, while external customers include the community, government, and industry. An educational institution is considered to be of high quality if there is a level of satisfaction between internal and external customers regarding the services provided.

Santri (students) are the primary customers in education. If the learning model implemented fails to meet the individual needs of students, the institution cannot claim to have achieved quality. Educational institutions should be assessed by their contributions in preparing students to become competent citizens, ready to face future academic and professional challenges. A pesantren that applies TQM must create an environment that allows each individual to contribute to improving the quality of their work processes.

Education also has the responsibility to make students aware of the diverse learning methods available to them. Institutions must offer students opportunities to explore various learning styles. It is important to note that some students may prefer a combination of learning approaches, and institutions must be flexible enough to accommodate such needs.

Success in learning is closely linked to educational quality, which requires a clear, structured, and continuous effort. First, there is the planning process. Planning involves determining future goals and outlining the necessary steps to achieve them. Some argue that planning is a time-bound activity and can therefore be defined as a coordinated activity to achieve specific goals within a set timeframe. Strategic planning, as the initial stage of strategic management, involves organizational staff envisioning the institution's future and developing procedures and actions needed to realize that vision (Soewarso Hardjosoedarmo, 2004).

Planning in educational quality management is highly focused on improvement. Quality must be a key element of institutional strategy, approached systematically through strategic planning. Without a clear long-term direction, institutions will find it difficult to plan for improvement. The concept behind strategic planning is customer-oriented, including vision, mission, values, goals, market analysis, SWOT analysis, operational and business planning, quality policies and planning, quality cost management, and monitoring and evaluation.

Next is implementation, where a carefully structured and detailed plan is put into action. Implementation typically follows once planning is deemed ready. Simply put, implementation is the execution of a plan. According to Majone and Wildavsky, implementation can also be seen as an evaluation. Meanwhile, Browne and Wildavsky describe it as the expansion of mutually adjusting activities (N. Usman, 2002).

The final stage is evaluation, which is a systematic assessment to determine the utility and effectiveness of a program based on specific criteria. Evaluation must have a clear purpose aligned with the objectives of the program. There are three key elements in evaluation: criteria (representing the ideal characteristics of the desired situation), evidence (obtained through research), and judgment (arising from comparing the criteria with the evidence) (I Nyoman Sutjipta, 2009).

Evaluation in educational quality management is closely related to the quality system, which always requires a feedback loop. This feedback mechanism is essential in a quality system to ensure that the final outcomes of a service can be analyzed according to the plan. Evaluation is a key component in the strategic planning of quality improvement and must be customer-focused, exploring two central issues: first, the extent to which the institution meets the individual needs of both internal and external customers; and second, how far the institution has achieved its strategic mission and goals.

Development of Integrated Quality Programs by Caregivers and Teams to Improve the Performance of the Pesantren

As the institutional leader, the *pengasuh* (caregiver) plays a critical role in determining the policy direction of the pesantren to achieve its objectives. At Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung, the caregiver develops both long-term and short-term programs in collaboration with several *asatidz* (teachers) and administrators. The selection of these supporting personnel is based on deliberation and analysis of past performance outcomes.

According to Usman, planning is the determination of organizational goals as well as the strategies, policies, programs, projects, methods, procedures, budgets, and so forth needed to achieve those goals (N. Usman, 2012). Therefore, planning and program development are essential requirements for every organization or institution, in addition to infrastructure and other supporting facilities. These plans may be implemented individually or collectively. Without well-formulated plans, any activity is likely to encounter

challenges and obstacles.

Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung, applies two learning methods in its educational programs: *sorogan* and classical methods. The *sorogan* method is an individual approach in which each student (*santri*) meets with a teacher (*kyai* or *ustadz*) one-on-one to read, explain, and memorize lessons. Meanwhile, the *bandongan* method is a group-based approach led by a *kyai* or *ustadz*, where students listen and write down translations or explanations of the lessons being delivered.

Implementation of the Integrated Quality Program in Improving the Performance of the Pesantren

Based on an interview with Ustadz Khoirodin, the caregiver of Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung, it was revealed that he consistently provides training and development to the *asatidz* to enhance their teaching skills. The primary objective of this initiative is to improve the quality of education within the pesantren. In this context, the *asatidz* play a crucial role in the overall educational process, particularly at the institutional level. Without their presence, education would be reduced to mere slogans, as all educational policies and programs ultimately rely on the performance of these frontline teachers.

The study also found that the selection process for new students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy involves several stages. These include written exams, interviews, and assessments of health and Qur'anic recitation ability. Thus, the pesantren categorizes prospective students based on their qualifications and readiness as an initial step in quality management, with the expectation of producing highly capable graduates. One concrete result of the successful implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) at this pesantren is the relatively short time required for students to complete their Qur'an memorization. According to Sukmadinata, a pesantren that adopts TQM principles must follow certain quality improvement and maintenance standards, which include: (a) customer focus, (b) total involvement, (c) measurement, (d) education as a system, and (e) continuous improvement (Sukmadinata, N. S. et al., 2010).

Field observations and theoretical analysis indicate that Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung, has successfully implemented the core principles of Total Quality Management.

Factors Influencing the Implementation of Total Quality Management

Based on the data obtained, several factors influence the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung. Among the supporting factors are the quality of human resources, particularly the *asatidz* and *pengasuh*, which are generally regarded as good. In addition, the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure has made the pesantren a trusted institution among students' guardians. The involvement of guardians, the surrounding community, and the local government also plays a vital role.

Strong community support and assistance from various parties should be maximized as opportunities to improve the quality of education in the future. This is in line with Sidi's opinion, who emphasized the importance of optimizing parental and community participation, as well as the effective management of existing resources within the school and its environment to enhance student achievement and overall education quality (Murniati & Usman, N., 2009).

However, aside from the aforementioned supporting factors, there are also obstacles to the implementation of TQM in the institution. One of the challenges faced by the pesantren is that some *asatidz* are required to teach multiple subjects. This situation arises due to a shortage of *asatidz*, which is not aligned with the actual instructional needs of the pesantren.

Another challenge, as stated by the *pengasuh*, is that the work culture of some *asatidz* and administrative staff has yet to meet the desired standards. Their understanding and knowledge of the concept and purpose of TQM remain limited. Salazaar asserts that failures in implementing TQM in education may result from several factors, including: (1) management expecting instant results from TQM, and (2) the belief that merely attending brief training sessions is sufficient for the successful application of TQM (Usman, 2013).

Therefore, it is essential to establish a work culture that supports accountability and quality-driven implementation of TQM. This includes making improvements to the institutional work ethic, as well as conducting external audits by quality management consultants to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The development of Total Quality Management (TQM) programs at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy Kotagajah, Central Lampung, is grounded in the fundamental principles of TQM. The *pengasuh* (caregiver) has taken proactive steps to improve the effectiveness of the learning process, including motivating the *asatidz* (teachers) to enhance their competencies. Additionally, the pesantren has provided IT training for the *asatidz* to enrich their teaching skills through the use of more creative learning media.

The implementation of TQM at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy has clearly contributed to improving

the performance of both *asatidz* and administrators in the teaching and learning process. This is evident in the graduation outcomes achieved by the students (*santri*), who meet the established graduation standards. Graduates of this pesantren are generally well-accepted by society in accordance with their competencies, and many continue their education at public and private universities, as well as other Islamic boarding schools.

There are two main factors that influence the implementation of Total Quality Management at Pondok Pesantren Al-Quraniyy. First, the supporting factors include the availability of human resources (*pengasuh*, *asatidz*, and administrators), adequate facilities and infrastructure, and the high level of trust and interest from the community. These elements provide strong motivation for the *pengasuh* to maximize their impact in improving educational quality.

Conversely, the inhibiting factors also stem from human resource-related issues, particularly that some *asatidz* and staff have not fully understood the goals and concepts of Total Quality Management. This lack of understanding may be due to the fact that some of them have not yet carried out their tasks in accordance with the desired expectations.

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